



# **NEWS HIGHLIGHTS:**

- **How I See It: A Newark Neighborhood Perspective**
- **Grassroots Leadership Institute Trains Community Leaders**
- **Home Depot Community Tool Lending Library**
- **Message in the Hood**
- **Just One Soccer Kick-Off**
- **Newark Now Tax Volunteers Help Residents Claim their EITC**
- **400+ Come Out to the Newark Now Easter Egg Hunt**
- **Volunteer Coordinator, Darrell Finkley, to be Honored in April**
- **Neighborhood Spotlight**
- **How to Become a Partner**



## **How I See It: A Newark Neighborhood Perspective**

Newark Now is giving our community partners a chance to show the world how they view their communities. At the end of March, Newark Now community partners were armed with cameras and trained in the art of photography. Now, it is up to them to set out into the community and photograph what inspires their community

involvement.

At the beginning of May, the cameras will be returned to our office for a review process. The top 30 pictures will be selected and enlarged. The respective photographers will then be contacted to write a description about what inspired their photograph.

On Thursday, June 16th, at the **New Jersey Historical Society**, it will all come together at the **How I See It photo exhibit and auction**. All proceeds from the event will benefit our community partners. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available. Feel free to contact us for more details.

## **Grassroots Leadership Institute Trains Community Leaders**

The **Grassroots Leadership Institute (GLI)** of Newark Now is a series of free workshops for volunteer leaders of neighborhood, tenant and faith based organizations. The GLI's intensive training equips Newark residents with the skills to be great citizens who work at the grassroots level to transform their neighborhoods into vibrant and livable communities.

The GLI provides the opportunity for neighborhood leaders from throughout the city to develop relationships with one another and to enhance and develop their network of support. Groups of leaders are given the opportunity to know each other informally and establish a sense of community. As a result, participants learn and practice valuable skills together, share

knowledge with each other and develop new ideas/strategies to create change.

The GLI workshops will be held **every Thursday from May 5th until June 2nd from 8:30pm to 8:30pm**.

To register or for questions please contact, Anthony Santiago at 973-733-3460

## **Home Depot Community Tool Lending Library**

Newark Now, with the help of Home Depot, has added a resource for community partners. The **Home Depot Community Tool Lending Library** loan out things such as rakes, garbage bags, gloves, shovels, clay removers, hedge cutters, and much more.

Library, an organization must be a registered partner of Newark Now, successfully



complete a partner application, and obtain a Tool Lending Library Card.

Tools will be available from **mid-May until mid-October**. They will be lent out for up to 48 hours for weekday events and 72 hours for weekend events. We hope that our partners find this to be a valuable resource.

If your organization is interested in participating, please contact Anthony Santiago at 973-733-3460.

In order to participate in the Community Tool Lending

- March 19-June 15, 2005: Just One Soccer League Season
- May 2005: Family Love Dinner Dance
- May 2005: Grassroots Leadership Institute
- June 16, 2005: How I See It

- June-August 2005: Newark Youth Golf (NYG)
- June-August 2005: Message in the Hood
- July-August 2005: Above the Rim
- More than Just Basketball

For pictures of our past events, please visit us online: <http://www.newarknow.org/gallery/>

## Message in the Hood



Violent crime among Newark's young people has risen steadily over the past few years. At the same time, the prevalence of gangs has grown in both strength and numbers. It is time that we do something about it.

Heru's Army, a group of Newark born young entrepreneurs and a Newark Now community ally, has decided to join our efforts with other partnering organizations to give the children and young adults of the community different options during times when a great deal of the violence occurs in the city.

Heru founded a community event "Message In The Hood" to occupy members of the community's time and bring awareness to very serious issues within our inner city neighborhoods.

Heru and partnering organizations scout out a distressed neighborhood to target for "Message In The Hood" programming. The target area is cleaned and prepared for the "Message In The Hood" festivities. At approximately 6pm Heru's Army begins the event with community vendors, refreshments, board games and a "family friendly" movie. The event attracts a crowd off the streets from

6pm to 11pm and provides information on city services and employment opportunities.

"Message In The Hood" uses entertainment to funnel information to the parents of our children, and educate them on local programs that are available for their children. Heru's Army establishes relationships with the community and will continue to provide the children with a secured environment to interact with each other and gain knowledge.

## Just One Soccer Season Kick-Off

Despite the cold weather, more than 400 people showed up to Branch Brook Park on Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> for the Just One Soccer League (JOSL) Season Kick-off. The season officially began Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. As the young people marched onto the field with their respective teams, they recited the Just One pledge.



This year's event was sponsored by the New Jersey Youth Soccer Association and included special guests such as County Executive, Joe DiVincenzo;

Councilman Hector Conchado; School Board President, Anibal Ramos; and Newark Now Founder and President, Cory Booker.



JOSL is a value-based recreational program for Newark Youth. Through soccer, JOSL strives to build communities and develop leaders, bringing together the players, parents, coaches, and volunteers from the neighborhoods. As a recreational league,

they focus on teaching sportsmanship, teamwork and leadership to the players and adult volunteers. They also foster stewardship over Branch Brook Park by the constant cleaning and preparation of our soccer fields.



## Newark Now Tax Volunteers Help Residents Claim their EITC



Thanks to Newark Now's volunteers we provided pro bono tax services to more than 60 Newarkers this tax season. Volunteer Income Tax

Assistance (VITA) Community Tax Clinics are critical to the economic well being of our city and our most economically vulnerable citizens. Consider that each year millions of earned income tax credit dollars go unclaimed within the city of Newark. Newark Now, in collaboration with the Newark Asset Building Coalition, works diligently to address this problem.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Sites, or VITA sites, were created to encourage

people in urban areas to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC could allow a family of four, making less than \$36,000 a year, to receive up to \$5,000. However, based on 1999 IRS data, only half of eligible Newark residents claimed their EITC. Of those claimed, the majority were by paid preparers that can charge up to \$300 for a service that VITA provides for free. Since VITA's inception, over \$57 million was claimed in Newark and a mere \$16 million went unclaimed.

## 400+ Come Out to the Newark Now Easter Egg Hunt

On Saturday, March 26, 2005, Newark Now held its annual Easter Egg Hunt. Despite the cold weather more than 40 volunteers and over 400 kids came out to West Side Park to participate in the festivities.



## Volunteer Coordinator, Darrell Finley, to be Honored in April



Our very own Volunteer Coordinator, Darrell Finley, will be honored on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> by the Fleetwood Tri-Block

Association at the Annual Honoring Angels Dinner/Dance. The event, honoring outstanding leaders in the community, will be held at 883 Sanford Avenue in Irvington.

Darrell, a Newark native, is a proud product of the Newark Public School system. While in high school, Darrell got

involved in Newark Do Something (NDS). NDS is an after school program that inspires young people to believe that change is possible. Its mission is to train, fund and mobilize students to be leaders who measurably strengthen Newark.

In Darrell's senior year of high school he was named Newark Do Something's Youth of the Year because he did something to address the increase of violence at his school. To address the problem, he planned and organized a peace rally. In order to attend, the students had to have perfect attendance and could not participate in any violent confrontations. Out of the 1,200 students

that attended his high school, 650 students successfully completed the event. This event led to him being named the 2001 Newark Do Something Youth of the Year.

After graduating from Barringer High School, Darrell began working at Newark Do Something. Darrell now works as Volunteer Coordinator at Newark Now, where he is continuing to grow as a leader in his community.

If you are interested in attending the Honoring Angels Dinner/Dance, please contact Debi Hall-Dean at 973-375-2205. Tickets can be purchased for \$45.

## Partner Spotlight : Fleetwood Tri-Block Association

The following was written by a community partner to spotlight the good deeds of our neighbors following a snow storm this past winter.

"On Sunday morning, with all that snow I looked out the window and saw several men from the block with shovels and snow blowers in a huddle. The next thing I knew they had spread out and cleaned the ENTIRE walkway, on both sides, from one end of the block to the other. The children came out with brooms and did steps and driveways for the seniors and disabled.

Several of us came out to cheer them on and put down salt. Then one woman decided to make tea and cocoa for them. Not to be outdone, another resident who had gloves for sale at the flea market, gave all the workers leather gloves. By noon, everyone was indoors, keeping warm, but free to go out without worry of hazardous ice and snow (at least on our block).

This may not seem like a big deal, but I have not seen such kindness and cohesiveness in all my years. I saw this as a classic example of what can happen

when people work together toward a common goal, and out of sincere concern for others. I am really proud of our Association."

\* Community Partners—do you want to spotlight your community in our next issue? If so, send your story to [moda@newarknow.org](mailto:moda@newarknow.org) or mail it to the Newark Now office, attn: Partner Spotlight. We look forward to hearing from you.



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## How to Become a Partner

A Community Partner is a neighborhood, block or tenant association that works with Newark Now to improve our communities. These organizations exist in each of Newark's five wards, and are led by dedicated community leaders who envision a brighter future for our neighborhoods.

Newark Now's Community Partners receive the benefits of all the services and programs that we provide. These services and programs inspire our community leaders to reach their greatest potential. Through training workshops, creativity seminars, economic empowerment initiatives, and a host of other programs and services, Newark Now educates and supports Newark's citizen-leaders and effectively prepares them to make lasting and positive impact in our neighborhoods.

If you are interested in becoming a partner, come down to the Newark Now office to complete an application.

For more information, feel free to contact Anthony Santiago at 973-733-3460 or visit us on the web at [www.newarknow.org](http://www.newarknow.org). We look forward to working with you in making Newark a more livable city.

**Visit us online!**

[www.newarknow.org](http://www.newarknow.org)

### HERE ARE SOME OF OUR UPCOMING SPRING PROGRAMS!

- Message in the Hood
- How I See It: Community Photo Exhibit
- Grassroots Leadership Institute
- Home Depot Community Tool Lending Library



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